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Atty. General addresses Exec. Comm.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales met with Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leaders on Feb. 20, to unveil a new Department of Justice initiative aimed at educating Americans about their religious liberties and to ask for the Southern Baptist Convention's help in identifying and reporting abuses of those liberties.

Gonzales, in an address to SBC Executive Committee members during their Tuesday afternoon session, noted that he is charged by the president with "protecting and preserving not only the safety and security of all Americans, but also their rights, liberties, and freedoms."

"One of our most cherished freedoms, one we've sacrificed greatly to defend, is our religious liberty," the attorney general said at the SBC Building in Nashville, Tenn. "Nothing defines us more as a nation and differentiates us more from the extremists who are our enemies than our respect for religious freedom. Our great country was founded on these principles, and many of us today believe it continues to thrive because of, not despite, them."



PROGRAM ANNOUNCED — U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales on Feb. 20 in Nashville called on Southern Baptists to help the Department of Justice identify and report abuses of religious liberty in the United States. He unveiled the First Freedom Project, aimed at educating Americans about their religious freedoms, during an address to SBC Executive Committee members Feb. 20 in Nashville, Tenn. (BP photo by Kristen Sayres)

BMC offers graduate program

BLUE MOUNTAIN, Ms. (Special) — Blue Mountain College, affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention, has received the go-ahead from accreditation officials to begin recruiting its first graduate degree class for the Master's of Education in Elementary Education.

"This is truly a signal achievement in the long and distinguished history of Blue Mountain College. We can now add 2007 as one of the four years of significant achievement in the life of the College: 1873 (founding of the College); 1956 (addition of a ministerial program); 2005 (coeducational status); and 2007 (addition of graduate study)" said BMC president Bettye Rogers Coward.

After Blue Mountain College received reaffirmation of its accreditation by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in 2005, college officials immediately launched into the development of a master's program in elementary education. With the recent on-site visit by the SACS Substantive Change Committee in January 2007, BMC college officials notified that the school could offer the graduate degree.

Since the 30-hour M.Ed. is a new program, the College will report to the Commission over the next two years to demonstrate the educational outcomes of the students enrolled in the program and the integration of technology into the teaching-learning environment.

The M.Ed. classes will begin this summer. Registration deadline for the first classes is May 1. Graduate classes will begin May 31 and run through the end of July. Students can earn up to 12 hours during the 2007 summer sessions.

For application and registration information, prospective students may contact BMC Office of Graduate and Continuing Education at (800) 235-0136, ext. 238. E-mail: graduate@bmc.edu.

The Department of Justice released Feb. 20 a Report on Enforcement of Laws Protecting Religious Freedom: Fiscal Years 2001-2006, which describes the importance of religious freedom historically in America and the role assigned to the justice department. The report also summarizes the department's accomplishments during the Bush administration to protect religious liberty through the enforcement of civil rights laws.

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, applauded Gonzales' action.

"The attorney general's desire to address a major meeting of SBC leaders to announce this initiative shows both the importance of the issue and the commitment of the justice department at the highest levels to defend every individual American's religious freedom rights, particularly their free exercise rights, which are too often infringed," Land told Baptist Press.

"This initiative is needed and should make a real difference. When individuals find themselves in a confrontation concerning their free exercise

rights, it helps to have the attorney general and the Department of Justice on your side," Land pointed out.

Among the cases included in the report is one defending the right of senior adults to pray, sing religious songs, and hold Bible studies at a community senior center. Other areas of enforcement results include education, employment, housing and lending discrimination, public accommodations and public facilities, land use, rights of institutionalized persons, crimes against persons and property based on religion, and religious liberty in the courts of appeals.

"We've launched scores of investigations involving religious discrimination in education and housing, a sharp and marked increase in the justice department's enforcement of these important federal protections," Gonzales said.

"We have fought to maintain and make clear the crucial distinction between improper government speech endorsing religion and constitutionally protected private speech endorsing religion."

Religious freedom is often referred to as the first free-

dom, Gonzales said, because it is a fundamental part of U.S. history and one of the nation's core principles.

"In the First Amendment to the Constitution, at the top of the Bill of Rights, the founders declared that 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.' Before free speech, before freedom of the press, before all of these other crucial rights, we put freedom of religion," the attorney general said.

"This area of law has not always been given sufficient attention by the federal government, but from its earliest days this administration has worked to increase enforcement of religious freedom laws, including those against religious discrimination," Gonzales added.

"I am very proud of the report we're releasing today, because it describes a legacy of protection unequaled since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964."

Editor's note: For a transcript of the attorney general's remarks, visit www.usdoj.gov.



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Is Jesus really Jesus?

Get ready. The latest and possibly most serious assault on the divinity of Jesus Christ is about to take place. It seems that some of the people in control of the news and entertainment media in this country just can't rest until they reduce Jesus to the status of myth and minimize His impact on the world.

The Lost Tomb of Jesus is scheduled to air on the Discovery Channel on the evening of Sunday, March 4. Motion picture producer and director James Cameron of Terminator and Titanic fame, along with Toronto film maker Simcha Jacobovici who bills himself as an investigative journalist, are convinced that they have uncovered the real story of Jesus.

They apparently believe that a set of ossuaries — ancient Jewish bone boxes — discovered in 1980 in an old tomb at the site of a Jerusalem apartment complex excavation contained the remains of Jesus and His family, including His mother Mary, Mary's husband Joseph, follower Mary Magdalene, and a son named Judah whom they speculate Jesus fathered with Mary Magdalene.

Think about it. If the bones of Jesus filled one ossuary, then the Resurrection and Ascension could be called into question. If Mary Magdalene's bones were buried alongside Jesus in another box, that would give credibility to the idea promoted in the Da Vinci Code book and movie that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married and enjoyed a typical physical and sexual relationship. If the bones of a son of Jesus and Mary Magdalene were contained in yet another ossuary, that would further reinforce the idea that Jesus was not really the Jesus of the Bible.

"WE'RE LOOKING FOR A CHURCH THAT EVOKES WORSHIP THROUGH VAULTED CEILINGS, ROBED CHORISTERS, AND TRENDY HOMILIES!"



Those are mighty serious contentions, so on what evidence do they base their theories on the contents of the ossuaries? Scratch marks on the outside surfaces of some of the ossuaries that are purported to be in the difficult-to-translate, archaic Semitic script used in the time of Jesus.

In addition, promoters of The Lost Tomb of Jesus have said that DNA recovered from the alleged bones of Jesus and Mary Magdalene indicate that the two people were not related and were therefore probably husband and wife.

Does all that speculation lead to an airtight case refuting once and for all that Jesus was the Son of God? Hardly.

Amos Kloner, the archaeologist who first examined the site of the tomb shortly after it was uncovered in 1980, told Associated Press that the purported names on the ossuaries are some of the most common of the time. He

also said the film makers' arguments fail to meet accepted archaeological standards but do make for profitable television.

"They just want to get money for it," Kloner told Associated Press.

Stephen Pfann, a biblical scholar at the University of the Holy Land in Jerusalem, also questions the validity of the Cameron/Jacobovici documentary. In the same Associated Press article, he points out that the markings on the bone boxes are hard to decipher and it's more likely the scratches don't even spell "Jesus."

"How possible is it? On a scale of one through 10 — 10 being completely possible — it's probably a one," he told Associated Press.

William Dever, described by Associated Press as an expert in eastern archaeology and anthropology who has worked on such sites in Israel for five decades, stressed that real archaeologists have known about the tomb and the ossuaries for a long time now.

"The fact that it's been ignored tells you something," said Dever, a professor emeritus at the University of Arizona. "It would be amusing if it didn't mislead so many people."

One other aspect that can't be ignored is the huge market in fraudulent antiquities, especially from that part of the world. Such ossuaries and other items have been proven many times before to be nothing more than unsophisticated forgeries (see <http://www.sbcpress.org/bpnews.asp?ID=16148>).

It's hard to understand why some people make such ridiculous and gullible efforts to debunk Jesus Christ. They will certainly fail, but what are Christians to do in the wake of such misguided assumptions about our faith? For starters, we can take to heart John 3:16. That says it all, doesn't it? Always has. Always will.

GUEST OPINION:

Movie makers skew Christianity

*By Phil Boatwright
Kansas City, Kn.*

rect an injustice perpetrated by a denomination, but to fuel the fire against organized religion.

Friends of God, a Home Box Office special helmed by Alexandra Pelosi, daughter of the new Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, is an entertaining yet somewhat jaundiced view of those who believe the Bible to be the inerrant Word of God. By showcasing wrestlers for Christ, a biblically themed amusement park, and a drive-through church where the driver is prayed for and then sent on his absolved way, an entire spiritual movement comes across as silly.

We already know the subjects of sex, violence, and language have been exploited by most filmmakers. The battle against objectionable movie content has

already been lost, because even Christians attend movies with sex and violence. When it comes to justifying the support of movies that profane God and Jesus, many blithely respond with "Oh, I tune that out."

If they didn't adhere to that justification, they wouldn't be going to many movies, and certainly not the ones nominated for this year's best picture.

In the documentary Fall from Grace, Kansas filmmaker Kevin Willmott focuses on Fred Phelps and the Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kan. Phelps protests America's relaxed attitude toward homosexuality and targets military funerals as a venue to preach God's wrath.

How Fred Phelps got to represent the Baptists, or sane peo-

ple in general, is scary but Hollywood always seems to be there quick as a flash to scrutinize sanctimonious zealots.

When's the last time you saw the secular film community recognize a clergyman known for righteous deeds? Even in the new release Amazing Grace, the filmmakers neglect the composer of that revealing hymn. We are not allowed to witness one of the most affecting conversions in all of history — that of John Newton, a slaver who came face to face with Jesus and then composed the song Amazing Grace.

Where are the films about Father Damien, who bettered the existence of people suffering from leprosy? Where's the film about Billy Graham, who has preached a message of salvation for 60 years? There are men and women of God who have turned their backs on the comforts of this world in order to love and care for their fellow beings. There are a few exceptions but generally, we are living in an era where the exposure of man's crimes is glorified on film, while his spiritual victories are relegated to obscure websites.

Boatwright is the editor and film reviewer for previewonline.org. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

Group retracts SBC mischaracterization

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A child sexual molestation victims' group apologized to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leaders on Feb. 22 for making false accusations that leaders had not responded to the group's letters.

The apology by SNAP — the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests and other Clergy — comes after the group made statements in recent weeks charging that Southern Baptist leaders had been unresponsive to SNAP's letters.

On Feb. 20, the Southern Baptist Executive Committee's Bylaws Workgroup discussed SNAP's concerns about child sexual abuse in churches, with most workgroup members expressing frustration that SNAP had made the charges which were repeated at times in the media.

Workgroup members were shown two letters from Executive Committee members to SNAP from last year. SNAP official Christa Brown, who was at the meeting, expressed surprise and said she never received them.

"I'm chagrined that I was unaware of these letters," Brown said in the Feb. 22 statement. "I'm very sorry about this and extend my apology to Mr. [D. August] Boto [an Executive Committee attorney] and other Southern Baptist officials."

David Clohessy, SNAP's national director, also apologized. "We said the SBC hadn't replied to us, and we were wrong. I have no idea how this happened, and I'm terribly, terribly sorry. I'm very upset and

embarrassed by this and deeply apologize to the convention for our mistake and for our erroneous comments to the press about the lack of reply."

Clohessy said SNAP would "keep helping Baptist victims and keep prodding Baptist officials until every wounded adult is recovering and every vulnerable kid is safe."

Brown said she was "grateful" she was allowed to speak to the workgroup and that SNAP's requests were discussed, but she added: "[A]t the end of the day, no child is any safer now than they were before."

However, Boto's Feb. 22 statement had noted, "The SBC has made resources available to assist churches in performing background research and we will continue to encourage every SBC church to make full use of those resources in their hiring processes."

He cited, for example, a number of SBC-related resources available on the Internet. "Our earnest prayer is that every Southern Baptist church will take the necessary steps to prevent such abuse — it is a stewardship the Lord has placed before them and one which we pray they will embrace prayerfully and diligently," Boto said in his statement.

SNAP twice held protests outside the SBC Building in Nashville, Tenn., the first attended by two SNAP members and a press representative, the second attended by fewer than five people. At the second, on Feb. 19, a press release was handed out stating they had delivered a let-

ter five months ago to SBC President Frank Page, Executive Committee President Morris H. Chapman, and Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission President Richard Land.

"Our letter was met with silence," the press release stated. "We received no response."

Brown and another SNAP official, Mike Coode, attended the workgroup meeting. One workgroup member, pointing to the letters sent to SNAP, told Brown and Coode that the group's press releases had been inaccurate and unjustifiably accusatory. The Executive Committee had responded to every letter, the workgroup member said.

Rules prevent the identification of any members and direct quotations.

A second member turned toward Brown — who was sitting with other onlookers — and told her: "I'm not your enemy; you're not my enemy; we're in the same boat; we take offense that you've made us your enemy; we're on your side; if you work with us, we'll work with you."

Page, who spoke twice during the workgroup session, said it would help the situation if SNAP apologized to the people the group said had not responded. Page, who responded to SNAP in an August letter, said an untrue picture was being painted of SBC leaders, whom he said had made every effort to communicate with SNAP.

Page also spoke to the issue of child sexual abuse, saying the Executive Committee and the Southern Baptist Convention will continue to do whatever they could to address the situation. He said it is extremely important to protect children's lives. Other workgroup members agreed. Of the workgroup members who spoke, nearly every one said more attention can be drawn to the need for better protective measures to be taken by churches within the denomination.

One member said the two sides should start with a clean

slate and be prayerful, because it is a very important issue. Another member said the issue isn't being swept under the rug. A third member said there is a moral and ethical imperative that Southern Baptist churches address the issue. A fourth member said his church does background checks on staff and volunteers, and he said other churches need to do the same.

Brown addressed the committee and gave her story, saying she had been raped as a minor and that the man continued working at a Southern Baptist church. Choking back tears, she said it wasn't until she took her story to a newspaper that the man was dismissed. The other SNAP representative, Coode, agreed with Brown's point, saying that the church is not solving the problem — the press is solving the problem.

Following Brown's and Coode's comments, however, a member of the workgroup directed their attention to the Florida newspaper article Brown had referenced, asserting that the article had not caused the perpetrator's termination, but had reported on the man's resignation when a lawsuit drew attention to his actions.

SNAP supports the establishment of an independent review board that would work as an auxiliary to the SBC, be funded by the SBC and would investigate reports of child sexual abuse. One workgroup member expressed doubt that such a national board would work because it would add a layer of authority over the local churches — something foreign to Baptist governance.

The workgroup meeting concluded 30 minutes beyond schedule after its members and the SNAP representatives had opportunity to express their various concerns, with the workgroup members expressing the intention of seeking ways to better equip churches to prevent instances of child sexual abuse.

Missionaries attacked

MOSHI, Tanzania (BP) — Southern Baptist missionary Kay Garvin, age 56, was shot in the chest by robbers on Feb. 23 near Moshi, Tanzania. After being taken to a local clinic to be treated, she was being airlifted to a hospital in Kenya late in the evening. Her wound was not thought to be life-threatening, according to reports. Garvin's husband Carl, age 60, also was injured in the attack, but his condition is not serious. A trained nurse, he has emergency medical training and was able to aid his wife immediately following the shooting, according to an initial report. Kay Garvin was conscious, breathing and talking after the shooting. The Garvins, first-term missionaries from Valley Springs, Ark., were attacked by robbers who entered their room in a hotel south of Moshi. The missionary couple was assisting three Southern Baptist volunteers visiting Tanzania to participate in a mission project. No one else was hurt in the attack, but one of the volunteers reportedly helped fight off the robbers. The Garvins, who work in evangelism and church planting in Tanzania, were appointed missionaries in 2005. She is a former elementary school teacher in Valley Springs and Green Forest, Ark. He was pastor of First Church in Valley Springs from 1988 to 2005, and also served for more than 30 years in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps and the National Guard. They have three grown children.



Carl Garvin



Kay Garvin

10 years ago

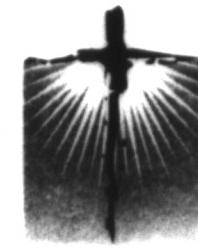
Bob Reccord resigns as chairman of the task force guiding the restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention, making the Norfolk, Va., pastor the probable nominee of the new North American Mission Board.

20 years ago

At least one Baptist dies and probably more than 25 Baptists were injured when a tornado sweeps through rural Jones County, according to Maurice Flowers, director of missions for Jones County.

60 years ago

William Carey College reports an all-time high enrollment for 1957 with 457 students enrolled.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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THE UNWELCOMED



**YOU CAN RESPOND .
RIGHT NOW!**

*Simply share the following prayer
with God in your own words:*

**1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)**

**2. I want forgiveness for my
sins and freedom from eternal
death. (I repent.)**

**3. I believe Jesus died and rose
from the grave to forgive my
sins and to restore my rela-
tionship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)**

**4. By faith, I invite Jesus
Christ into my life. From this
time on, I want to live in a lov-
ing relationship with Him. (I
receive Christ as my Savior
and Lord.)**

*"But as many as received him,
to them he gave the right to become
children of God, even to those who
believe in his name." (John 1:12)*

*If you make a decision for
Jesus Christ today, contact a
local Baptist church for spiritual
guidance.*

I am privileged and honored to be in scores of our churches each year. Sometimes it is because they cannot find anyone else to preach, and other times I get to be there for a great celebration of centuries of ministry. Regardless of the reason the blessing is mine. I cannot remember a service in which there was not a welcome time. The pastor, a staff member, or occasionally a lay person will tell everybody how glad they are that they have come and welcome the guests. There have been times that I have been asked to give the welcome in a church that I had never been to before, and I was glad to do it. The problem with the welcome time in our worship services is that it comes from 10 to 90 minutes too late. Long before anybody ever stands to say, "We are glad you are here," the visitor with all of his or her uncertainties, anxieties, and awkwardness already feels what they are going to feel.

It is amazing how unwelcome we can make people feel and how unaccommodating and unreceptive of folks we can be. The writer of Proverbs says, "A man that has friends must show himself friendly" (Prov. 18:24a). So I deliberately make it a practice to go about meeting and welcoming folks as though I have been there for 20 years, but sometimes you cannot get folks to even stop and shake your hand or look at you and acknowledge that you are even alive or maybe even nod their head and speak. Even the ushers or greeters are reluctant to welcome you or to hand you a bulletin. I walked into a service recently and the usher was standing at the door with a fist full of the order of service. I spoke and reached out to get one of the bulletins only to be told that there were some inside on the table. I said, "Thank You," and went on but I could not find the table.



Directions

**Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board**

We worry and get all wiggly about our music programs. We talk about the content of the preaching whether it is strong enough in Biblical content or whether or not we are presenting Jesus in an evangelistic way. If the people who come into our churches feel as though nobody cares about them even before they get off the parking lot, it is extremely difficult to convince them that the Jesus we know and love deeply cares about them either. He does care, and we must also.

By contrast to some awkward experiences we may have had, there have also been some absolutely memorable and uplifting experiences. Some years ago I was out of town one Sunday and was going to visit a church that I had heard about, but I had never been there. When I turned into the parking lot there was a man standing there smiling and waving at me. He pointed me to a place where I could park. When I got through parking and turned my car ignition off, there was a man standing by my passenger door smiling. He opened the door gently and said, "Hello, we are so glad that you have come to worship with us today." I said, "Well, thank you. It is great to be here." He said, "Where are you folks from?" Now I did not think that my Mississippi accent was that bad. In fact, it actually wasn't to him either. He just recognized that we were not regulars and sensed that a fellow was trying to find his way around. I said, "We are from Mississippi." Surprisingly and shockingly he replied, "I have never been to Mississippi, but I

have heard so many good things about it and I have always wanted to go there." I wanted to say, "Do what?" I refrained and responded, "We would love to have you come." Then the man directed me to one of a number of doors that led into the worship center and said, "If you will just go right over there, it is probably the closest and easiest way to get in and get a good seat. When you get to the door there will be people to help you find your way." I said, "Thank you," shook his hand, and walked on across the parking lot. I was going to the door that he had pointed me to but before I reached the door a man came up to me and a lady came up to my wife. They spoke to us and said, "We are so happy to have you with us today." They were shaking our hands and pointing us toward the door as they walked over with us. They introduced us to some people just inside the door who walked with us into the worship center to help us find a seat. As we went to sit down, they spoke to one of the ushers inside of the worship center, and he came over to greet and welcome us. He said a few positive things about his church, pastor, and choir, and then said, "If you need the restrooms they are located..." He told us exactly where they were in a short walking distance and said if we had any kind of need, emergency, or there was a way he could help us during the service that he would be right there all of the time and he was. He did not disappear.

It was probably 20 to 30 more minutes before the pastor

came to the pulpit to say, "We want to welcome all of our guests." Well, my soul and body, he did not have to welcome me because I felt like I had already been adopted into the family. When the pastor gave his greeting all of the thoughts of the hospitality and experiences that we had felt leading up to that moment were reinforced and reverberated in our hearts. It is amazing how receptive we were to the work of the church, a word from God, and to the special music that we joined together to sing. It was all uplifting because we were already lifted before it started.

We need to train our people to share their faith with others and have a passion for evangelism. We need to have good music and Christ-honoring preaching in our churches. We need facilities in which people can meet and the work of God can take place, but if the atmosphere is not warm, inviting, and receptive it is doubtful that we will ever reach or attract a world with people who may be unfriendly, self-centered, self-contained, and closed to those around them. It will not happen!

Please understand that I know there are things that go on in our lives that sometimes get us off focus. I also know that you cannot make people be friendly, loving, happy, and wholesome but with some help and encouragement some of them can be so that when people come to worship with us and the pastor gets up to welcome the guests, they will feel that they have already been welcomed and are glad they have come. Jesus clearly pinpointed that truth to His disciples as He said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples because you have love one to another" (John 13:35).

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MS POSITIONS

MT. LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH, Water Valley, Miss., is seeking a full-time minister. Please submit resume to search committee, 906 Stephens Street, Water Valley, MS 38965 or call Betty Melton (662) 473-2095.

PIANIST NEEDED: Eastside Baptist Church, Pearl, Miss. If you are an interested musician and need additional information, call (601) 939-2433 or email peggyeastside@bellsouth.net.

MT. MORIAH BAPTIST CHURCH, Bogue Chitto, Miss., searching for minister of music leader. Looking for someone with experience and knowledge of working with all age group choirs, and who can direct and lead congregational singing, Christmas, & Easter cantatas. Send resume to music minister search committee, 814 Marwood Loop, SE, Bogue Chitto, MS 39629.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, TULLAHOMA, Tenn., a Southern Baptist Church, conservative in its theology, progressive in its methodology is seeking a fulltime Minister of Education/Building Administration. Resumes should be sent to Dr. Herb Hester, Pastor, 108 E. Grundy Street, Tullahoma, TN 37388.

Homosexual group aiming protest at Miss. College

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Mississippi College (MC) in Clinton has been targeted for a March 22 protest by a national homosexual rights group because of the Baptist-affiliated school's disciplinary policies regarding sexual impropriety.

"The Equality Ride is two months of sustained activism inspired by the Freedom Rides of the civil rights era. It is a journey by bus to initiate discussion about faith and sexuality in communities where it is most controversial. An unfortunate number of Christian colleges and universities blatantly condemn certain aspects of human diversity," according to the web site of Soulforce, a group which identifies itself as championing the rights of homosexuals, lesbians, bisexuals, and "transgendered" people.

"We come in pursuit of greater understanding," said Haven Herrin, co-director of Soulforce Q, a youth-led movement within Soulforce, in a Feb 21 press release. "Our goal is to foster a conversation about LGBT people and faith. While such conversations are often marked by politics and divisiveness, we bring open minds and hearts to academic settings, where we hope for a genuine exchange of ideas."

However, past Soulforce protests have resulted in civil disobedience, disrupting schools' daily schedules and even Southern Baptist Convention annual meetings.

"Mississippi College seeks to be a university recognized for academic excellence and commitment to the cause of Christ, and to ensure that we fulfill our mission we make every effort to provide our students a quality Christian education in an

environment where inquiry and truth are valued. In order to do this we do not allow political action groups to hijack our daily operations to present their 'view' because they feel their voice is not being heard," said MC President Lee Royce.

"Soulforce is an aggressive challenger to the positions held by Mississippi College, the Mississippi Baptist Convention, and Southern Baptist churches. We will not allow our campus to be 'taken over' even for a day by those using bullying tactics to promote their agenda," Royce said.

Mississippi College is one of 32 Christian colleges where 2007 Equality Ride protests are planned. Other Baptist schools listed as protest sites include:

- Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Ok, affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.
- Baylor University in Waco, Texas, affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas.
- Union University in Jackson, Tn., affiliated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention.
- University of the Cumberlands in Williamsburg, Ky., affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention.
- Samford University in Birmingham, affiliated with the Alabama Baptist Convention.
- Cedarville University in Cedarville, Oh., affiliated with the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio.
- Yellowstone College in Billings, Mt., affiliated with the Montana Southern Baptist Convention.

"We would expect Soulforce to respect our constitutional rights, as we respect theirs," Royce said. "Academic institutions have the freedom to define and pursue their educational missions



SOULFORCE IN ACTION — An unidentified female member of the homosexual-rights group Soulforce, Inc., attempts to disrupt the 2002 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in the America's Center in St. Louis. SBC President James Merritt was delivering his presidential address at the time. The woman was telling Merritt to call her. City police also were present to escort out about a dozen activists who purposefully walked two by two to the front of the main floor area as messengers were gathered for the first day of the Southern Baptist Convention's 145th session. (BP photo)

without undue interference. As Soulforce continues their crusade to challenge traditional, Christian positions, it is becoming clear that Soulforce is an antagonist of academic freedom.

"Every generation needs to wrestle with what they believe and why. We

welcome and encourage that pursuit at Mississippi College, but we will not allow groups that are in opposition to what we believe, and who demand free access to the campus, to force themselves on our students in the name of tolerance or diversity."

REVIVAL

Bethesda Church, Terry: Revival, Mar. 11-14, 7 p.m.; youth services, Mar. 9-14, 6 p.m.; Gene Douglas and Chad Douglas, speakers.

STAFF CHANGES



2. Layton and Family, First Church, Runnelston

1. First Church, Runnelston, has called Chris Layton as pastor Feb. 4. Shown, from left, are Courtney Layton, Layton, Shena Layton, Lori Layton, and, in front, Kristen Layton.
2. Sunrise Church, Petal, called Gerald Buckley as pastor Feb. 18. The church held a reception for Buckley and his wife Billie Feb. 25.

Nominees sought for MBC posts

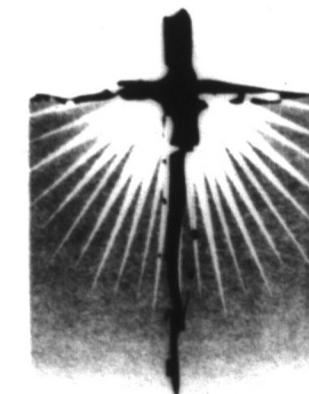
Members of the Committee on Nominations for the Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC) will soon begin meeting and reviewing the trustee/board member positions on the boards and commissions of the Mississippi Baptist Convention for 2008.

According to Matt Buckles, committee chairman and pastor of First Church, Vicksburg, there are a limited number of vacancies to be filled on the following boards and commissions:

- Board of Ministerial Education
- Christian Action Commission
- Education Commission
- Historical Commission
- Mississippi Baptist Children's Village
- Mississippi Baptist Foundation
- Baptist Health Systems, Inc., Jackson
- Baptist Memorial Health Care System, Inc., Memphis
- Blue Mountain College
- Mississippi College
- William Carey College
- Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

The Nominating Committee will work in conjunction with the heads of the institutions and agencies in bringing a list of nominees to be approved by the messengers at the 172nd annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention on October 30-31.

Nomination forms can be obtained by contacting the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, Executive Administration, P.O. Box 530,



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Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3201 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 201. E-mail bbox@mbcb.org.

Completed forms should be mailed to the Committee on Nominations, Executive Administration, at the above address to be received by May 1.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. AWANA, Calvary Church, Braxton



2. Deacon Ordinations, High Hill Church, Philadelphia



3. Deacon Ordination, New Prospect Church, Oxford



4. Deacon Ordinations, West Marks Church, Marks



1. The Truth in Training AWANA group of Calvary Church, Braxton, finished their Discover I book. Shown are Cayla Scott, Lakyn Bynum, Elizabeth Errington, and Regan Neely.

2. High Hill Church, Philadelphia, ordained Danny Brewer, Cleve McBeath, and Richard Graham as deacons Jan. 21. Shown are Brewer, McBeath, Graham, and pastor Ray Files, front.

3. New Prospect Church, Oxford, recently ordained Jay Parks as deacon. Shown are Jim Burke, April Parks, Parks, and pastor Ken White.

4. West Marks Church, Marks, ordained Randy Moore, Jimmy Sanders, and Trip Hawkins as deacons Feb. 4. Shown are interim pastor Tom McLaughlin, Moore, Sanders, and Hawkins.

5. The Dorcas senior adult Sunday School group of Bowmar Church, Vicksburg, conducted a campaign in the church to raise funds for the Memorial to the Missing in Jackson. They collected 68 pounds of pennies and brought them to the Baptist Building. Shown are Virginia Prevost, Debby Nichols, Inez Kellicut, Louise Hall, and Pete Hall.

6. The Brotherhood of Fellowship Church, Starkville, assisted Bethel Church, Poplarville, in rebuilding after Katrina. Shown are Roger Johnston, Danny Spencer, James Williams, John Lee, pastor Dustin Stockstill, Rhonda Goodwin, and Archie Goodwin.

7. North Long Beach Church, Long Beach, set a goal for \$500 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and received \$1907.62. Four of the children who participated in collecting money were, from left, Trinity Armentrout, Abigail McQueen, Gabriel Sacco (front) and Anthony Sacco.

8. North Columbia Church, Columbia, held a commissioning service for their RAs. Shown are the participants.



5. Senior Adults, Bowmar Church, Vicksburg



6. Katrina Relief, Fellowship Church, Starkville



7. Lottie Moon Offering, North Long Beach Church, Long Beach



8. RAs, North Columbia Church, Columbia

JUST FOR THE RECORD



9. Adams Recognized, Morgan City Church, Morgan City



10. Men's Ministry, Parkway Church, Hernando



11. Pastor Appreciation Day, Concord Church, Benton-Tippah Assoc.



12. Music Minister Ordination, First Church, Richland

9. Morgan City Church, Morgan City, recognized Lynda Adams for guiding (and doing most of the work) for the church's centennial celebration. Adams was given a recognition plaque and proclamation of appreciation. Shown are Adams and pastor Robert M. Moore, Sr.

10. The men's ministry of Parkway Church, Hernando, recently hosted a community-wide wild game supper and men's rally. Richard Riddle, speaker; Mike Ramage, pastor.

11. Concord Church, Benton-Tippah Association, honored pastor Robert E. Walker and his wife Bettye with a monetary gift for Pastor Appreciation Day. Shown are Walker, Bettye Walker, and Billy Tigrett.

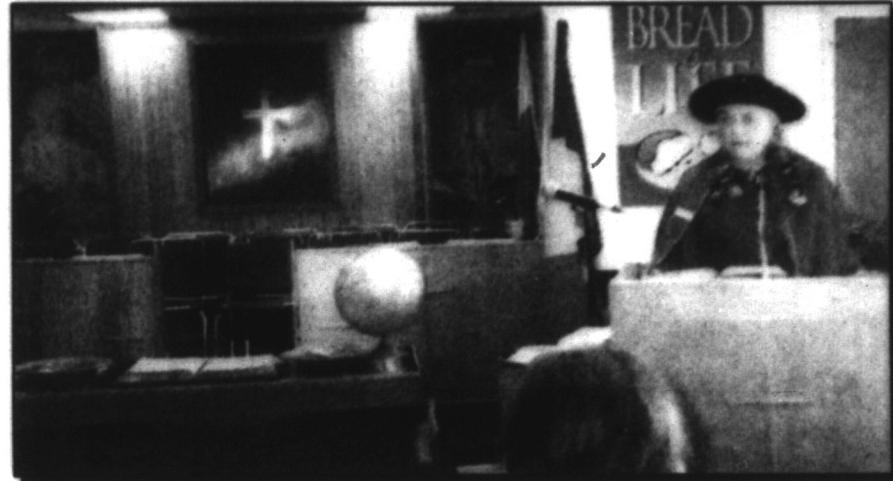
12. First Church, Richland, recently ordained their minister of music, Tim Moak, to the gospel ministry. Shown are Moak, Mary Moak, and pastor Bill Patterson.

13. Calvary Chapel, Parchman, held a Missions Weekend Jan. 26-28. Shown is Norma Whitten, one of ten missionaries who spoke, in native Quechua dress.

14. First Church, Polkville, recently held dedication services for their newly renovated sanctuary. Shown are Glen Wiggins, Willie Carr, pastor Norris Ables, and Danny Harrison.

15. Four members of Calvary Church, Summit, recently returned from a 10 day mission trip to South Africa. Shown is pastor Ron West, Jason Spiers, Jeff West, and Sammy Harnsongkram. They worked with TSEASA, a church-starting organization.

16. Tylertown Church, Tylertown, recognized 19 couples who will celebrate 50 or more years of marriage in 2007. Total years of marriage for these couples totals 1,050 years. Each couple received a certificate of congratulations.



13. Missions Weekend, Calvary Chapel, Parchman



14. Dedication Service, First Church, Polkville

17. Mt. Pleasant Church, Lincoln County, exceeded their \$2500 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering by collecting \$3424. The church averages 50 in Sunday School.

18. Bethesda Church, Terry, will host a youth DiscipleNow March 23-25. Open to 7th-12th grade. Cost is \$25, and all churches are invited. For

more information, call Duncan Tucker at (601) 546-2120 or 398-6712.

19. Kreole Avenue Church, Moss Point, will host the Jacob Blue Singers Mar. 4, 6 p.m. For more information, call (228) 475-1306. Don Womble, pastor.

◆ ◆ ◆



15. South African Mission Trip, Calvary Church, Summit



16. Couples Recognized for 50+ Years of Marriage, Tylertown Church, Tylertown

COLLEGE NEWS



Fayard, MC

Fletcher in Green, a painting by Mississippi College graduate student Paul R. Fayard, won a superior achievement award in painting in the 2007 Mississippi Collegiate Art Competition at the Meridian Museum of Art. Judge Susan Maakestad announced Fayard's award and other award winners at the opening reception at the Museum on Feb. 10. **Fear of Commitment**, a mixed media work by University of Mississippi student Chris Brady, was chosen as the Best of Show. Shown is Paul Fayard.

MR XLI PMTW SJ LMQ
XLEX LEXL YRHIVWX-
ERHMRK AMWHSQ MW
JSYRH; FYX E VSH MW
JSYRH; FYX E VSH MW
JSV XLI FEGO SJ LMQ
XLEX MW ZSMH SJ
YRHIVWXERHMRK.

TVSZIVFW XIR: XLMVXIIR

Clue: Z = V

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Twenty-Fourty-Six.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD

20. The children of Main Street Church, Goodman, collected a sack of pennies for the Memorial to the Missing. Shown are some of the participants.

21. First Church, Newton, will host the Wildfire Student Conference Mar. 4-7, 7 p.m. nightly. A love offering will be taken. The conference, targeted towards teen and college students, will include evangelist John Schaffner, music by The Way, and the production of the play Dear Diary. For information, visit www.wildfire07.com or call (601) 683-2066.



McCoy

22. Stephen McCoy, a member of First Church, Byram, obtained the rank of Eagle in the Boy Scouts of America Oct. 12, 2006. His project was to raise enough money to purchase 230 large print New King James Version Bibles for the new sanctuary of the church. Stephen has been involved in scouting since age six and is a member of Troup 99.



20. Children Collect Pennies, Main Street Church, Goodman

23. A reception was held January 28, at First Church, Sumrall, for pastor Glenn Davis, in honor of his 20 years of service at the church. Glenn and his wife Carol were presented with a plaque and a monetary gift from the church.



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23. Davies Honored
for 20 years of service
at First Church, Sumrall

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NOBTS bivocational music class open for enrollment

JACKSON, Ms. (Special) — March 19 is the beginning date for Class Voice, the eighth of eight courses at three locations in Mississippi sponsored by New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) and designed to provide basic training for bivocational music directors and other music leaders in churches.

The other seven courses are Song Leading; Worship Planning; Reading Music; Rhythm/Pitch; Reading Music; Harmony/Melody; Hymnology; Music Administration/Staff Relations; and Survey of Music Resources.

The cycle of courses is scheduled over a two-year period. Each course is independent and has no prerequisite. Each student who completes the eight courses earns a Church Music Certificate from NOBTS, plus a credit of eight hours toward an on campus degree program. There is a one-time registration fee of \$25 and the cost of each course is \$125.

A \$60.00 scholarship is available for all first-time students. Students already enrolled are not eligible. The grant is limited to one person per church.

Class Voice will meet once a week for two hours for eight consecutive weeks at the following locations and times:

- Broadmoor Church, Madison, beginning March 19 (7-9 p.m.). Jimmy McCaleb, teacher. Telephone: (601) 924-1233.

- First Church, Booneville, beginning March 19 (7-9 p.m.). LuAnne Ford, teacher. Telephone: (662) 728-6272.



NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

- Northcrest Church, Meridian, beginning March 19 (6:30 - 8:30 p.m.). Buddy McElroy, teacher. Telephone: (601) 681-6615, (H) 601-679-1887.

A new cycle of courses will begin with the course, Song Leading, on August 20 at the following additional locations:

Area 1: Hernando Church, Hernando, Barry Tweedy, teacher. Telephone: (662) 429-6361.

Area 3: North Greenwood Church, Greenwood, (August 21). Tommy Smith, teacher. (662) 453-2801.

Area 4: Winston Association Office, Louisville. Dave Tribble, teacher. Telephone: (662) 803-9990.

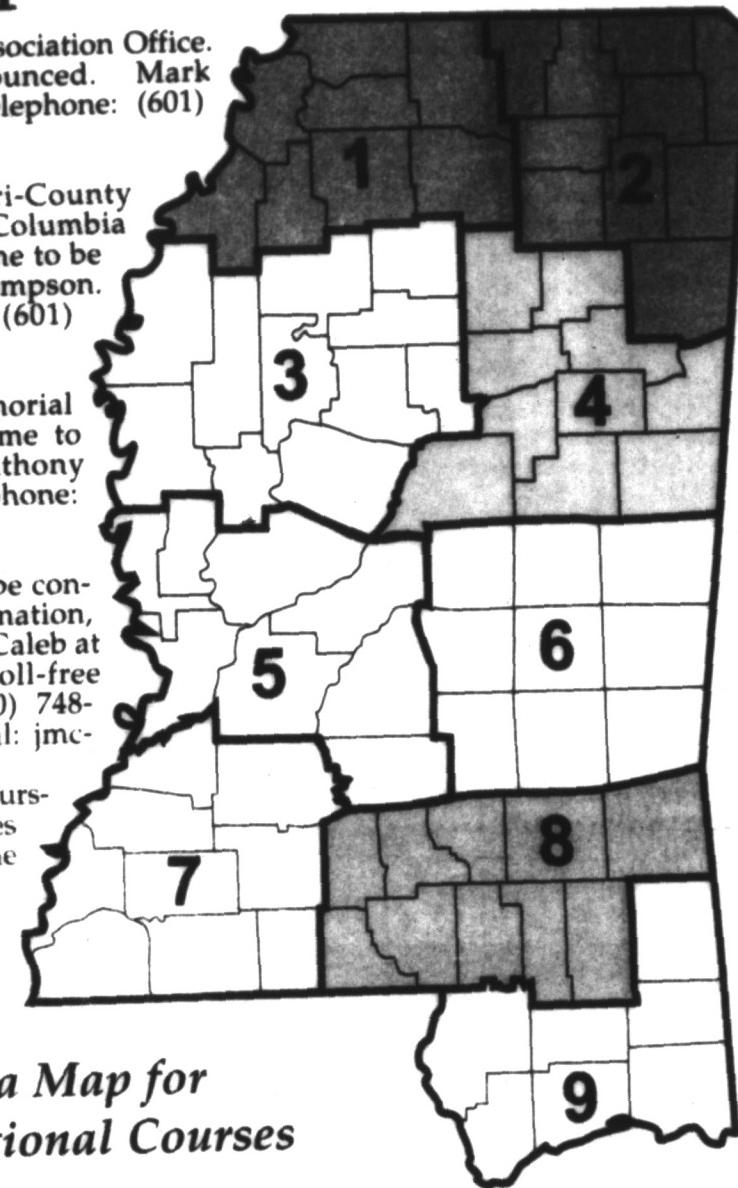
Area 7: Franklin Association Office. Time to be announced. Mark Hamilton, teacher. Telephone: (601) 894-5848.

Area 8: Tri-County Association Office, Columbia (begins August 21; time to be announced). R.E. Thompson, teacher. Telephone: (601) 270-8166.

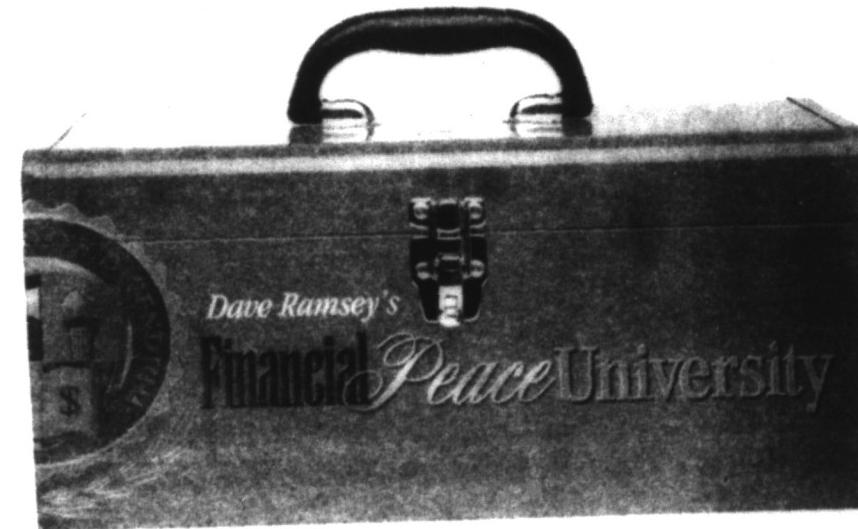
Area 9: Grace Memorial Church, Gulfport. Time to be announced. Anthony Turner, teacher. Telephone: (228) 863-5096.

The teachers may be contacted for more information, or contact Jimmy McCaleb at (601) 292-3273 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 273. E-mail: jmccaleb@mbcb.org.

The bivocational courses are funded by fees and by gifts to the Cooperative Program.



**Area Map for
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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

JANUARY 2007

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Bruce Culpepper
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Joe V. Dewey
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Mrs. Johnnie Mae Hall
Mr. Floyd Lynch
Ms. Margaret Lynch
Mrs. Hazel Different
Mr. & Mrs. Ted West
Sue Smith Doerr
Mr. & Mrs. Mickey Hale
Mr. Grady Downs
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins
Jerry Dosier
Mary Lynn, Cheryl Leigh
& Ralph Perkins
Mr. Troy Lee Durr
Dr. & Mrs. Robert M. Hanvey
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Mr. R. L. Dye
Ms. Kathy D. Ferguson
Mary Lynn, Cheryl Leigh
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Mr. Steve Edney
Dr. & Mrs. James H. May
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Elizabeth Ewing
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Mr. & Mrs. James H. Johnson
Mrs. Myrtle N. Fenn
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Mr. & Mrs. David E. Bowles
Mrs. Louise Flora
Mr. & Mrs. Larry Melton
Mr. Troy Floyd
Mr. Donald L. Robertson
Mr. Charles L. Fortenberry
Mary SSC, FBC-Columbia
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BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Jesus Forgives Our Sins

John 8:2-11,30-36



Boydston

By Angie Boydston

I love teaching children; it always provides an opportunity to break concepts down to their simplest form. When I talk with children about repenting of their sins, I tell them that repentance means asking God for forgiveness of a sin and then walking away (in the other direction) from the sin. We talk about leaving that sin behind as best we can, knowing that God has forgiven us. Even into adulthood, we often have a hard time understanding how God really forgives us.

The good news is that Jesus would rather forgive our sins and see us lead lives of righteousness than He would condemn us in our sins. However, we need to know that when

Jesus provides the opportunity for us to be forgiven, He expects something in return from us. We must be ready to forsake the ways of life we have lived in the past and to lead a pure life in the future. Repentance and forgiveness are not merely declarations that have no effect on our daily living. Having our sins forgiven will change both our lives and our lifestyles.

In John 8:2-4, Jesus was teaching informally in the temple when the religious leaders brought a woman before Him whom they had caught in the act of committing a sin. This particular lady had been found in the act of adultery, something I'm sure she wanted to be kept a secret. However, she was

made to stand in full view of all those in the temple as a way of exposing her sin and shaming her.

John goes on to show in verses 5-6a that the religious leaders' real motivation in bringing the woman forward was to trap Jesus. They knew that His message was centered on mercy and forgiveness. In order to leave Jesus with no right answer, they pointed out that according to the law of Moses the woman should be stoned to death. Then, they asked Jesus what He had to say about it. Clearly, the leaders weren't as concerned with the woman's sin as they were with Jesus' response to it. If Jesus said to let her go, he would be in conflict with the law.

Their mistake of pitting Jesus against the law is one that we make sometimes too. Sometimes we focus more on the sin rather than what the consequences of the sin are. We

try to categorize and place levels of blame on sins when really they should all be viewed equally. We should always define sin according to God's Word, being careful not to misuse or misapply the Word.

As the passage goes on to show in verses 6b-11, Jesus quickly put a stop to this game the religious leaders were playing. His answer to them was that those who were without sin should cast the first stone. That response dispersed the crowd fast. Soon Jesus was the only one left with the woman. When He noticed that none were left to condemn her, He told her that He also did not condemn her.

Jesus was not negating what she had done because as He let her go, He told her to leave her life of sin. As is always his goal in forgiveness, He desired that she make the choice to stop what she had been doing and to walk away from her sinful ways. Although no overt reference is made that this woman repen-

ted, we can clearly see Jesus' mercy and the possibility of a new start if she would make a break with her sinful life.

Surely, we would like to think that this had a profound impact on this woman's life, but we cannot know that she made the change that Jesus required. Repentance and forgiveness are the beginning of life change. Sin is a cruel master. Those who choose to continue in their sin become slaves to sin as Jesus outlined later in chapter 8, verses 30-36. Here, Jesus also articulated a characteristic of true disciples – they continue in His Word. Those who do so know the truth, and they know true freedom. This freedom comes from asking for forgiveness, repenting and leaving sin behind, and continuing to follow Jesus' words.

Boydston is Preschool and Children's consultant in the Sunday School Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and a member of Pinelake Church, Brandon.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Acknowledge a Secure Salvation

1 Peter 1:1-12

By Ivan Parke

In the twenty-first century, Americans spend more than ever for security. The proposed budget (2007) for the Department of Homeland Security is \$35.6 billion. The Transportation Security Administration, an agency that Homeland Security oversees, will receive \$4.7 billion for aviation security. Because crime has been rampant, alarm systems protect a growing number of cars, homes, and businesses. Without installing security software, surfing the internet safely would not be possible. Security counteracts uncertainty, a fundamental feature of earthly life.

In the first century, the Apostle Peter addressed believers living in five Roman provinces (present-day Northern Turkey). They were facing religious persecution, an uncertainty as distressing as

international terrorists, local criminals, and computer hackers. The topic "unjust suffering" appears in every chapter of 1 Peter (1:6-7, 11; 2:12, 19-21, 23; 3:14, 16-17; 4:1, 4, 13-15, 19; 5:1, 9-10).

To encourage his readers, Peter began his letter with amazing details of eternal security, salvation through Jesus Christ.

1. Before Time

God, knowing all things in advance, solved the problem of sin. When? ANSWER: before the crucifixion, actually "before/from the foundation of the world" (1:20; see also Mt. 25:34; Eph. 1:4; Rev. 13:8; 17:8). Why? ANSWERS: [a] God cared (5:7). He left nothing to chance because we matter. [b] God could. We cannot save ourselves.

The Greek noun *prognosis*, translated "foreknowledge," reveals God as proactive (1:1-2a; see also Romans 8:29-30). Our



Parke

salvation was His idea. His character persuaded Him to save us. His character preceded our lack of character (i.e., sinfulness).

If God does not foreknow, then the Old Testament prophets could not have prophesied what eventually happened through Jesus Christ (1:10-12).

2. In Time

Jesus Christ died on behalf of sinners (1:2; 2:24; 3:18) and the Holy Spirit sanctifies the saved (1:2), fulfilling what God the Father had conceived before time. Our salvation is a Trinitarian effort.

At the end of verse 3, Peter emphasized the saving effect of the resurrection: "has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (see also 1:21; 3:21). Likewise, the Apostle Paul asserted, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17; see also Rom. 5:8). The typical testimony of believers, therefore, is incomplete: i.e., "I am a

Christian because Jesus died on the cross." The Scriptures state that we are Christians because Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead.

3. End of Time

The process of sanctification concludes with praise, glory, and honor (1:7). Seeing Jesus is the reason for celebration. Having lived with Jesus, already knowing Him physically, Peter could not curb his own excitement: "though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory" (1:8b; see also 1 Jn. 3:2).

"And, Lord, hasten the day when the faith shall be sight." [Horatio G. Spafford]

During the process of sanctification, the power of God guards every believer (1:5). The Greek verb, translated "to keep" (KJV), "to shield" (NIV), or "to protect", is a military term depicting armed soldiers at their post. Nothing can disrupt the saving work that God begins in us (see Phil. 1:6). Tribulation even hastens our sanctification, a reason to rejoice in the midst of suffering (1:6-7; see also Jas. 1:2-4).

An inheritance in heaven also awaits the sanctified. Peter picked three adjectives and one clause to describe it: [a] imperishable, [b] undefiled, [c] will not fade away, and [d] reserved (1:4). "Imperishable" contrasts silver or gold, "perishable" metals (1:7, 18) that the world calls "precious." "Undefiled" refers to moral purity. "Will not fade away" indicates lasting quality. "Reserved" means "safe and sound." As he wrote these words, having heard the "Sermon on the Mount" years earlier, Peter probably recalled the superiority of heavenly treasure (Mt. 6:19-20).

Application

In the second half of the first chapter, Peter applies the theology of verses 1-12. He answers the "So what?" question, beginning with a "therefore" (1:13). Verses 13-25 will be the focus of next week's lesson. Scriptures cited are from the New American Standard unless otherwise indicated.

Parke is Associate Professor, Department of Christian Studies and Philosophy, Mississippi College, and a member of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs



The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted.

Photograph attachments are permissible. Please make articles concise. Include the **who, what, when, where** details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to crop-

ping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



24. Youth Group, Arkadelphia Church, Arkadelphia



25. Noteburning, Bunker Hill Church, Marion County



26. Ministerial Ordination, Line Creek Church, Morton



27. Ribbon Cutting, Poplar Springs Church, Poplar Springs



- 24.** The youth of Arkadelphia Church, Bailey, prepared candy bags during a Valentine party Feb. 7 for a local nursing home. Shown are the participants.

- 25.** Bunker Hill Church, Marion County, held a note burning ceremony to acknowledge retirement of debt on the church's Family Life Center and Christian Education/Office building. Shown is the building committee. From left, Jim Allen, John Gardner, Randy Gardner, Patricia Duncan, and Bridgett Brewer.

- 26.** Line Creek Church, Morton, licensed Tal Vardaman to the gospel ministry Feb. 11. Shown are Vardaman and Kent Pickett.

- 27.** Poplar Springs Church, Golden, held a ribbon cutting ceremony recently dedicating the nursery at the church in memory of Zelma Holcomb who was killed in a car accident. Shown are pastor Charles Holcomb, Mary Helen Wilson, and Irene Williams.

- 28.** Peach Creek Church, Panola Association, had a note burning ceremony Feb. 4 in celebration of their debt retirement on their education building. Shown are Lael Palmertree, Otis Jenkins, Bunny Jenkins, Ann Lambert, Billy Joe Lambert, and, in back, pastor Bobby Caples.

- 29.** Members of Iglesia Maravilloso Salvador, a joint venture of First Church, Cleveland, and Calvary Chapel, Parchman, are seen in front of their van, which was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Bob Kent of Cleveland.

- 30.** First Church, Richton, recognized Mary Touchstone for 10 years of service as church secretary. She received a plaque and gift at the Jan. 7 worship service.

- 31.** Ron Jordan, pastor of Holly Springs Church, Foxworth, had to preach



28. Noteburning, Peach Creek Church, Panola Assoc.

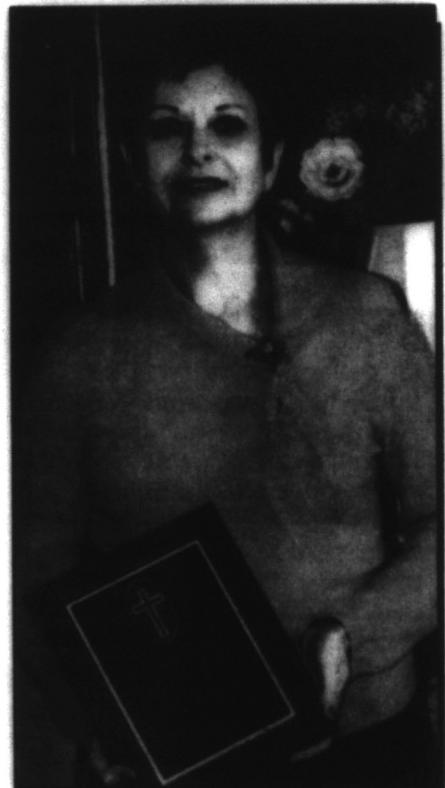


29. Members of Iglesia Maravilloso Salvador

from the roof of the church because he had challenged the members of his church to exceed the goal of 75 in Sunday School. The church exceeded their goal.

- 32.** The GAs of First Church, McLaurin, Hattiesburg, visited Bedford Care Nursing Facility Feb. 10, taking 40 Valentine goody bags and cupcakes to the residents and staff. Participants included Jennifer Pittman, Melanie Linton, Carlee Lott, Andrea Wilson, Hannah Jacobson, Breanna Pittman, Melinda Mixon, Betty Legg, and Jonathan Pittman.

- 33.** Enon Church, Grenada, recently licensed Ricky Harris to the gospel ministry. Shown are Harris with pastor Fletcher Moorman.



30. Touchstone Recognized, First Church, Richton



33. Harris and Moorman, Enon Church, Grenada